New York State Ski Racing Association - Nordic, Inc.
DRAFT Fall Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2026

Call to Order on Zoom at 6:01 PM by President Mark Chmielewicz (and representing Glenville Hills Nordic-Adk Vauhti). In attendance were Darwin Roosa, Past President; Ed Luban, CNY Nordic; Eric Hamilton, Secretary and Shenendehowa Nordic; Jack Rueckheim, Treasurer and Cayuga Nordic; LiLynn Graves, web developer; Carl Klossner, Polar Bear, Sean Halligan, Saratoga Biathlon; Chris Yarsevich; Vice President and HURT; Steve Halasz, NY Biathlon and Saratoga Biathlon; L. Gordon Curtis, Osceola Ski Club; Rob Hinsdill, Boonville Nordic; Julianne Stemp, NYSEF, Amanda Zullo, Peru Nordic and ESWG; Paul Smith, NYSEF and Junior Cross Country Ski Racing Committee; Achilles Koglantis, L. Placid; Erin Wilson, Buffalo Youth Nordic; Peter Minde, Peru Nordic; Bob Underwood, Executive Director.

Minutes from April 26, 2026, spring meeting were approved following a motion by Eric Hamilton, seconded by Chris Yarsevich, which carried.

President Mark asked that the website topic be moved up for attention early in the meeting. He also remarked about the frustration the organization has experienced for over three years with attempts to update or replace the current outdated website and content that is critical for effective communication with the racing community.

Website Revitalization Jack Rueckheim introduced Ithaca-based web developer LiLynn Graves, who has extensive experience at Cornell University. After an initial review of the NYSSRA-Nordic's WordPress website, LiLynn reported numerous broken links and outdated content that may confuse users.

Darwin raised concerns that versions of WordPress web software have not been user friendly and presented persistent security issues caused by malware and viruses resulting in desktop PC crashes. LiLynn responded that WordPress has been updated and improved to be more robust and easier for content managers.

For a more complete look and a potential work proposal for us, LiLynn would need to see aspects of the host server used for the website. Chris Yarsevich offered to email Tom Moffett and Eric Seyse to ask permission for LiLynn to access the back end of the server and InMotion Hosting, Inc. Bob Underwood can probably also help because Tom may have transferred server access rights to him.

Mark said the discussion with LiLynn was encouraging and that the organization looks forward to her further review and website recommendations.

Jack reported that Darryl Caron has provided names of other possible web developers.

Treasurer's Report Treasurer Jack Rueckheim described the balances of the various funds as of August 31, 2026, shown in the attached report. He noted a total balance of $30,624.44. Without the Mid-Atlantic Fund, the actual total balance is $13,108.17.

Recent expenses include the $5,102 insurance premium for 2026–2027 and the $2,500 Executive Director stipend. No claims were submitted by last season's BKYSL Festival organizers. SkiReg transfers revenue to Jack by check on a near-monthly basis. Jack gave a membership

breakdown as of the most recent SkiReg payment and encouraged everyone to renew. Bob reported that annual membership, including one-day memberships, has remained between 400 and 500.

Secretary Eric Hamilton described the annual reporting obligations to IRS and the NYS Charities Registration Office. System changes now require electronic reporting of financial numbers with a DocuSign e-document. Mark cautioned that DocuSign emails have a high potential for spam threats.

Executive Director's Report Bob Underwood reported that he has been in communication with Julianne Stemp about next season's ADK Tour de Ski races. He needs content and fresh photos for the e-newsletter. Julianne suggested to consider hiring a photographer on per diem to take photos at races. Sean Halligan suggested adding to the annual Racing Season Check List asking organizers to assign a parent volunteer to take race day action photos for the e-newsletter.

Insurance Sean Halligan reported that the $5,102 insurance premium paid for this season is slightly higher due to greater participation numbers – a good thing. We are good to go for the season ahead.

Committee Reports

Mid-A / Junior Cross Country Ski Racing – Paul Smith reported that the committee met 9/24/26 via Zoom with six participants. See attached report. They worked on scheduling Mid-A JNQ races, details for end of season Team New York NENSA Championship Races including looking for trip leaders, communication, and training camps. Sean Halligan stated that if a camp is scheduled, he needs to notify our insurance carrier so details including kind of housing can be added to the policy. Chris Yarsevich asked about a way to get juniors together for skiing at a race venue location.

Biathlon – Steve Halasz's report from the Biathlon Committee's 9/13/26 meeting is attached. He summarized the draft schedule of races, noted discussions about the NY Biathlon website, the Jim and Betty Schreiner Award, a survey on how to turn out more participants, and summary of summer events. Julliane said that Maddie Phaneuf is aware of the importance of introductory biathlon activities. She will ask for the schedule to help bolster participation in biathlon.

Cross Country – Eddie Luban reported that he has emailed all race organizers. Clubs have started to renew their annual club sanctioning. So far, there is one sanctioned and paid race – Shen Nordic Jan. 9, 2027. GHN-Adk Vauhti plans five races. Erin Wilson reported that the check is in the mail for their Buffalo races. Chris Yarsevich stated that it will help to have the Tour de Ski schedule public so other organizers can schedule around them to avoid conflicts.

Ski Orienteering - Janet Findlay submitted the attached report.

Bill Koch Youth Ski League – Julianne remarked that BYKSL participation numbers appear to be increasing due to good snow. NYSEF took a large group of 35-40 participants to the NENSA BKYSL Festival last season. A location for the 2027 NY BKYSL Festival needs to be organized. It will be helpful to get festival information out through the revamped website and e-newsletter.

ESWG – Amanda Zullo reported the dates for the Empire State Winter Games are February 4-7, 2027.

Points List – Bernadette Obrien did not submit a report.

Racer Grants Darwin Roosa noted that the NYSSRA-Nordic Racer Support Grant Program was established in 1988 to provide direct support for athlete development. The annual dollar amount allocated for grants and the number of grants awarded has always been dependent on treasury funds available. Jack reported that during recent seasons generally $1,000 is designated for grants. Julianne remarked that even several grants with small dollar amounts can be a help to racers. Securing additional funds for grants from corporate and other organization donations would be desirable.

Discussion recognized the need to more adequately publicize the grant process for potential racer applicants. The structure of the grant process should cover athlete requirements, what is eligible, how to apply, and deadlines. Darwin noted that a Google application form for online submission has been used for several years. All information should be announced in the e-newsletter and on the website with a dedicated web page that includes access to the application link. Potential changes to the website in the coming months are an opportunity to improve communication about the grants.

There was consensus that a reasonable timeframe would include publicizing grants availability and process **October through December 2026**, deadline for applications **January 1, 2027**, review of applications by a review committee during **January**, and the award of grants by **late January**. Darwin offered to draft a “grants available” announcement for the e-newsletter and blog space of the current website. Jack volunteered to recruit a racer grant application committee. Mark reminded us that someone from the review committee would need to regularly check the inbox for N-N Gmail for questions about the grant process.

Cross Country Ski Championships

Attention is needed to schedule and plan the 2027 NYSSRA-Nordic Cross Country Ski Championships. In the past two years, the Championships were included in the end of season Tour de Ski event races. Bob said that for several people mid-March is a difficult time to hold the Championships and that a race earlier in the season could work. Mark asked if the ESWG Cross-Country Skiing races, although in mid-season, could be used as Championship races. Jack asked if an earlier “Tour” race could be the Championships. Julianne would need to check with the participant “Tour” race organizers. Darwin was aware that Eric Seyse has been potentially interested in a future season for hosting the Championships at Glenville Hills by GHN-Adk Vauhti. Darwin will contact Eric to follow up and report back.

Officer Positions

President Mark noted that the 2026 fall meeting is the occasion for electing board officers to new two-year terms. No slate of candidates had been compiled because it remains difficult to find members willing to serve. The search for candidates will continue and include a “wanted” recruitment item in the e-newsletter.

Additionally, Mark reported that on September 18, 2026, Eric Hamilton, N-N Secretary for 36 years, submitted a letter of resignation from the position. Eric said, “I will turn over materials, files, and the corporate seal over to whomever the organization elects to succeed me. I will not

surrender my treasured life membership nor my memories of my original NYSSRA-Nordic membership number 1231. I insist on retaining my finishing position in all future ski races in which I participate."

Jack Rueckheim moved to accept Eric Hamilton's resignation with deep regret and sincere appreciation for his many years of service to NYSSRA-Nordic members. Mark Chmielewicz seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Next Meeting Sunday, April 25,2027 by Zoom at 6 PM.

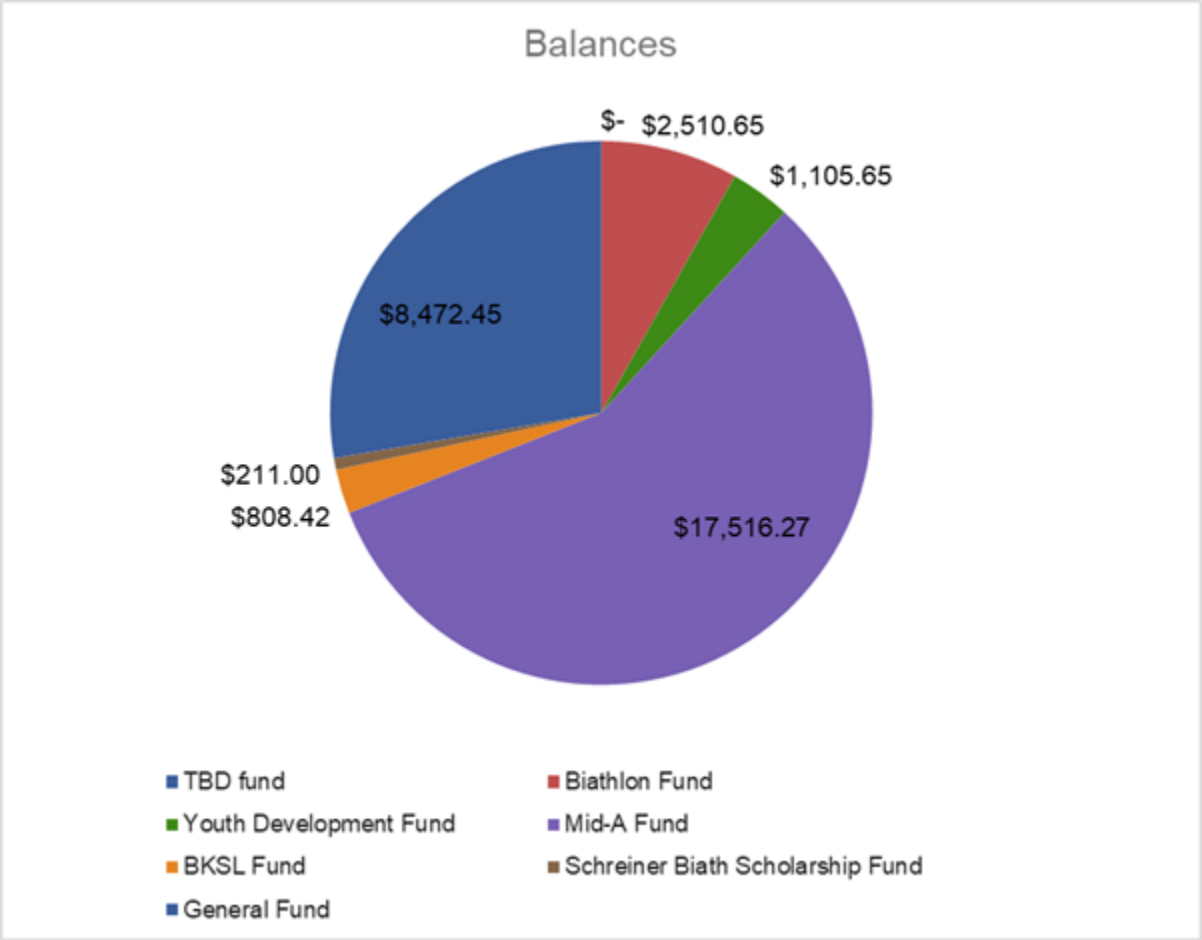
Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM on a motion by Jack Rueckheim, second by Eric Hamilton, carried.

See attachments next page.

Respectfully submitted,
Darwin Roosa
Notetaker for the Evening

Attachments:

TREASURER REPORT



August 1, 2026

Fund	Balances
TBD fund	$ -
Biathlon Fund	$ 2,510.65
Youth Development Fund	$ 1,105.65
Mid-A Fund	$ 17,516.27
BKSL Fund	$ 808.42
Schreiner Biath Scholarship Fund B11	$ 211.00
General Fund	$ 8,472.45
Total	$ 30,624.44

Key Business Reward Checking **NYSSRA-Nordic Account**		
Beginning Balance	$	30,384.44
3 Additions	$	270.00
1 Subtractions	$	(30.00)
Ending Balance 8/31/26	$	30,624.44

Junior Cross Country Ski Racing Committee

9/24/26 Meeting (Zoom)

Attendees 1. Paul Smith (Committee Chair, NYSEF) 2. Jason Hettenbaugh (RNR, Mid-A Chair) 3. Matt Dougherty (PSC) 4. Ethan Townsend (SLU) 5. Dana Hatton (Clarkson) 6. Bill Frazier (LPHS, Section VII)

Calendaring

- **Mid-A JNQ Schedule**. This is pending Jason re-confirmation with Dustin at Osceola ski center and Paul Allison at Gore Mtn. I put in placeholder technique and format of each race based on what Lake Placid will be for the Saturday and Sunday Eastern Cup/Supertour races which are double classic races, and assumptions about what venues can host certain formats. 1. January 9-10th Osceola. (5/10km Ind. Skate. 5km Ind. Classic?) 2. January 23-24 Gore Mtn. (5km Ind.

Skate. 7.5km Mass Skate?) 3. January 30-31 MVH Lake Placid. (5/10km Ind Classic. Classic. Sprint Classic)

- It should be noted collegiate coaches made a good point to try and have something on the calendar in December to give more opportunity for their athletes to attend more JNQs. Rob made the point that the Tug Hill region has had really good snow in December the past three seasons. It should also be noted there is a long term plan for MVH to start early snowmaking on not just the competition loops but other terrain as well which would help early season (December) race opportunities at that venue. This current JNQ calendar is a safe one for this year in case there is low snow, and allows better planning (plane ticket purchase) for Junior Nationals in Alaska.
- As far as the school racing calendar Bill made a point to try and schedule the Section VII Lake Placid invite on either Saturday Jan. 2nd or Jan. 16th to avoid the JNQ schedule. Rob is planning on hosting a Section III invite at Potato Hill Farm on December 28th. Empire State Games is currently set for the weekend of February 6-7.

<u>Team New York NENSA Championship Races</u>

- U16 Championships, Titcomb. Farmington, ME. March 12-14. Still looking for someone to take the lead on staffing this trip. This could also be one where Team NY skiers could have support on the ground (coaching, ski service) but travel with families.
- Eastern High School Championships, Rikert, VT. March 19-21. Paul Smith has committed to being trip leader with Bill Frazier and Matt Dougherty also coaching. Might need one additional coach depending on numbers. Lodging, Meals, Transport has already been arranged and would all be included in the trip cost.

The consensus is to try and get information out to families and teams about these end of season race opportunities as soon as November/December which should be very doable. As well as advertise trip pricing. It was discussed this could be a flyer with general info and a link to more details. Also make clear the qualification process for these trips which is essentially participating in one JNQ race. These trips do operate under the umbrella of NYSSRA Nordic.

Communication

- One of the big topics of discussion was how to best market racing and training opportunities in the state. As well as information that passes through this committee. This has been a challenge for sure, there is no school league website that does this. The NYSSRA Nordic website is very outdated with a calendar that has not been kept current, Jason brought up the Mid-A site which really only serves

the purpose of putting up JN trip updates and race series points but could be expanded to include more? Dana pointed to the Maine state high school skiing site as a good example of a scholastic driven website with good information where everyone knows to look for information. Rob reiterated the point of needing a link between all the different groups. Is it as simple as using social media... A Facebook page perhaps? Basically we need a place where coaches, athletes, parents know to look. Coaches and Officials education opportunities could also be published here. Rob brought up the structure of NENSA and how it reaches the New England cohort of the ski community pretty well. A different financial model for sure but worth noting what they can and cannot accomplish through their organizational model as a regional coordinator. In that same vein Rob also mentioned how to potentially better fund opportunities for venue managers and race officials through the state school system? As opposed to the current self funded venture of becoming a ski racing official. Of course this would result in higher quality competitions at the regional level, and might encourage individuals to pursue national level training and certs.

Training Camps

- There was really good discussion around a topic that I believe really moves the needle for developing junior cross country skiers and creating a better culture around training, cohesion, and teamwork. NYSEF offers summer and winter camp opportunities but I think the best way for New York skiing to move forward is more cooperative camps that are truly accessible to beginner skiers. Jason mentioned historic success with large training groups at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, and with Team HURT in Queensbury. The OTC now has increased pricing to around $125/person/night and limited some access for outside groups. Ethan talked about some of the challenges once you go off of a college campus dealing with the State's regulations around group sizes and health codes. There have been good collaboration camps between NYSEF and RNR the past few summers with camps in the Rochester region. Rob brought up central NY being a good "central" location for dryland camps with good land access around the potato hill farm area. Paul Smith's College also came up as a good spot for camps; this is proven by the fact USBA and USSS have used the campus for projects the past several years.

Potential Race Venues

- Short conversation around other venues. Lapland Lake was brought up. Rob mentioned Section II continues to use the venue during the week for competitions. They have 1km of snowmaking but limit racing on weekends to better serve their business model to tourism and recreation. A couple other notes: Paul

Smith's College/ VIC Trails is looking for a groomer for the upcoming season. There will be a USSS L100 coaching clinic in Rochester November 21st.

Paul Smith
NYSEF Head Cross Country Ski Coach

Biathlon Committee Fall 2026 Meeting Notes

Attendees:

- Pete Indick
- Carl Klossner
- Nick Gretzinger
- Steve Halasz

Draft schedule:

Dec 12-13 Eastern Cup - MVH - https://www.biathloneast.org/

Jan 10 - Polar Bear Biathlon Race at McCauley Mt., Old Forge, NY

Jan 23 - Syracuse

Jan 30-31 - Saratoga (Curt says this date sounds good)

Feb 4-7 - Empire State Games

February 19-21 - U.S. Biathlon Masters Nationals & NorAm Masters Championships @MVH

Feb 27-28 - Syracuse Polar Bear Pursuit Weekend/Day Challenge

March 20-21? NY Championships - 2nd weekend in March

- Who will host the champs?
- Some discussion of dovetailing this with the NYSSRA champs
    - For the last 2 seasons this has been the Tour de Ski final race at the Paul Smith's VIC
        - This was Saturday, March 14th last season
    - There is an 8 point range at the VIC - could this host a champs the same week-end?
    - Could enough volunteers be called up?
    - **Steve:** Ask Paul Smith's coach Matt Daugherty
- Carl has to be away 2nd weekend of March
- pencil in as placeholder

March 19-21 - Rikert Eastern High School Champs

Pete Indick - Survey / Participation Incentives

Pete sent out a survey with the goal of figuring out how we can turn out more participants. It is open until September 20 at:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScbrl_VR3k2R_GSHXd6JKDT8_bzJXT3Ob-3a8t1Dk07J5chKg/viewform

One question asked about ESGs, and whether it was desirable to be required to qualify. The need to qualify would be a driver to bring people out to the other races. Pete said that the response so far has been mostly in favor of *not* requiring qualification. It was pointed out that many Canadians, and other far-flung participants compete at ESGs, and we wouldn't want to discourage them. Carl also reminded us that we probably don't have control over this. The new runners of the event, since the state relinquished it, are interested in selling hotel rooms in Lake Placid, and are likely opposed to anything that might reduce participation.

As a follow-on to this discussion, Carl suggested the possibility of using the season points as an incentive. Accumulation of season points could qualify you for a "big" prize at the NY champs.

Website

Nick noted that the website has improved.

- Dinnie expressed to him that he was no longer interested in maintaining the website.
    - Does he still plan to keep the season points list up-to-date? Steve will follow up with him.
- Steve should ask Darwin about the status of the new NYSSRA website.
    - Can this be jump-started?
- Some links from the NYSSRA site to the biathlon site are broken.
- It would be good to increase the immediate visibility of biathlon on the NYSSRA main page.
    - It should be easily visible / discoverable in the title bar.
    - Currently it's listed under "divisions" - Perhaps "disciplines" or another title would clarify what is listed there
- Carl noted that Maddie Phaneuf had expressed interest in being an editor of the site.
    - It could be a venue to post results for NYSEF racers, which could be motivational for them.

Jim and Betty Schreiner Award

- As of 8/31, there is $211 available to award. Last year at this time it was $658.
- This is usually announced in September.
- The decision committee will announce the awardees December 1st.
    - This gives time for more money to flow in from membership renewals in Oct/Nov.
- It would be nice to have a set amount for this in the biathlon budget, which could be replenished by the donations.

Steve Halasz - First Term

My first two-year term as chairperson is up. No other names were put forward, and those present agreed that I will continue as chairperson. The by-laws allow a maximum of 2 consecutive terms.

Summer Events

- 7/18 - Syracuse Biathlon Sprint
    - https://www.webscorer.com/race?raceid=440413
    - https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10V9vTmYkpH2BM3c4LrQszjZhLt-uelIg51TItvhx0m0/edit?gid=0#gid=0
    - The Syracuse/Polar Bear Pursuit Challenge was held on July 18th at Osceola even with an interesting mix of conditions. The week leading up to the races were hot and had very poor air quality from the Canadian wildfires. Things were looking promising for the Saturday races with temperatures dropping and the smoke moving to the south. In typical Osceola fashion, things started off well but quickly had hard rain move in right after the start of the sprint race. Conditions improved in-between the two races but at the start of the pursuit, the wind direction changed bringing the smoke back up from the south and the rain returned. Regardless, a good group of competitors completed the challenge with Giovanni Bucci taking the men's Challenge Championship. Results for both events can be found at the links below.
- 8/15-16 - Saratoga Sprint and Pursuit ~12 pre-reg
- 8/22 - Syracuse Biathlon Double Header - **Cancelled** due to low registration
- 9/5 - Polar Bear Biathlon Individual Relay
- 9/16 - Saratoga Mtn. bike biathlon

2026-27 NYSSRA Ski Orienteering

Current plans call for our traditional Ski-O season opener to be held at Lapland Lake in mid-December, along with a multi-day event for the Empire State Games in Lake Placid in early February. We hope conditions will permit us to organize an event on our new map at Brookhaven Winter Park in Greenfield, and also to use the Cascade Ski Center trails near Lake Placid which are reopening under a new owner. As always, the Rochester orienteering club will organize one or two local mid-winter meets depending on snow conditions.

A significant reduction in Canadian tourism continues to affect the Lake Placid area and given the current political climate we have no expectations of this to change soon. As approximately 50% of our Empire State Games racers come from Canada we expect this will curtail attendance significantly again this year. Regardless, we're planning to offer the same 3-day schedule as in past years in hopes that providing a multi-day competition will attract our Canadian friends.

We continue to work with Scotts Cobble, Dewey Mountain, Mt. Van Hoevenberg and Garnet Hill to keep maps current and set challenging courses for our events around the state and given the uncertain conditions that seem to be the norm now, greatly appreciate the efforts of our meet organizers and course setters who often make an event come together at the last minute.

The NYS ski-o community greatly appreciates NYYSRA's interest and support of our activities and our fingers are crossed for a good winter!

Janet Findlay